

42 CLASSROOMS ORDERED CLOSED FOR FIRE DANGER

Nine Public Schools Affected by Edict of Superintendent Maxwell.

ONE IS CONDEMNED.

Old Wooster Street Firetrap Unfit for Occupancy by Pupils.

Superintendent of Schools Maxwell announced to-day that forty-two classrooms in four public schools in Manhattan and five in Brooklyn would be closed at once and remain closed until they were so reconstructed as to be safe for the pupils.

The Evening World's exposure of the ramshackle conditions in the New York public schools, following the Collingwood fire horror, spurred the officials to action, with the result that to-day the orders to shut the dangerous classrooms and put the pupils who have occupied them on part time were issued. The schools affected are:

In Manhattan.

Annex to Public School No. 2, Henry street; four classrooms closed.

Public School No. 125, Wooster street; five classrooms closed.

Public School No. 163, One Hundred and Twentieth street; ten classrooms closed.

Public School No. 130, Baxter street; two classrooms closed.

In Brooklyn.

Public School No. 20, Union avenue; five classrooms closed.

Public School No. 50, South Fourth street; eight classrooms closed.

Public School No. 17, Seventy-first street; three classrooms closed.

Public School No. 15, Schermerhorn street; three classrooms closed.

Public School No. 104, Ninety-sixth street and Fifth avenue; two classrooms closed.

The action of Supt. Maxwell was taken as soon as he had digested the contents of a letter made by Superintendent of Buildings C. B. J. Snyder.

School Long Condemned.

The old school at Wooster street was built in 1823 and is one of the worst examples of a fire-trap in New York. It has been condemned time and time again, but has been patched up.

After a rigid inspection of Public School No. 25, on the Hudson street near Ralph avenue, one of the death-trap Brooklyn school houses, Building Inspectors Aldridge and Schmittberg to-day reported that the building was unsafe.

Their report was forwarded by Building Superintendent David P. Moore to the Superintendent of Public Schools, with a request to have the building immediately altered so the inspectors recommended in their report.

The report of the inspectors reveals conditions in the school which show it to be absolutely unsafe for occupancy.

One of the exits is utterly inadequate in case a panic should arise," says the report.

The inspectors found that, although the doors in the school open out, they are of antique pattern and surrounded with heavy framework of wood and iron, and the heavy heating apparatus of the school is in itself a peril, they find.

The radiators are set too close to the walls in many of the classrooms, and the boiler-room is surrounded by wooden partitions, in some cases touching the steam-generating plant.

The stairways are the most fertile sources of danger in the opinion of the inspectors. They are of wood and full of twists that would mean death in time of panic. None of the classrooms opens directly on to the stairways, but all are reached by narrow passages. In many instances the classrooms open on to another classroom and access to the stairs is gained through the other rooms.

The outside fire-escapes are inadequate and must be replaced at once by stairways of steel and stone, say the inspectors, and the old and rickety wooden partitions in the boiler-room replaced by iron bulkheads. Before the school is safe for the pupils, the inspectors say, the stairways, the heating apparatus of the school, the radiators and the boiler-room must be replaced by new and modern ones and new partitions erected on the south side of the building.

In case of this school The Evening World said:

"This school is a fire-trap and should come down. The Board of Education admits that the building is unfit to house pupils in."

ERIE LOSES 12 COACHES AND 2 ENGINES BY FIRE.

Fire, starting from some mysterious origin, destroyed twelve coaches and wrecked two engines on the Woodbine switch of the Erie Railroad near Spring Valley, N. J., early to-day.

GIRL'S AMAZING TALE OF SUICIDES ALL PURE FICTION

Helen Baxtor, Who Turned on Gas, Said Four Chums Had Killed Themselves.

THEY'RE ALL LIVING.

Policeman Saves Her, and She Will be Sent Back to Former Home.

From the standpoint of the police reporter, Helen Baxtor is a morning glory that blooms at dawn and withers as the day advances. Regarded strictly as a news asset, she assayed 100 per cent. at 4 o'clock this morning, when, after an attempt at suicide she declared that she was one of five girls who had come from St. Paul ten months ago and that the other four had killed themselves by inhaling gas.

As Helen repeated her story her value as a news asset began to diminish. First, she reduced her estimate of the number of girl friends who had committed suicide to three. Then she dropped it to two. Later she said that only one of the St. Paul quintet of which she was a member had killed herself.

This one, she said, was Grace. Her description of Grace's end was quite harrowing. She told how she (Helen) with Jack, Grace's husband, went to Jacob Little, that one night and found Grace, a bride of only a few days, cold in death.

When arraigned in West Side Police Court on a charge of attempted suicide Helen resurrected Grace.

"Why did you say that all your four friends came with you from St. Paul committed suicide by gas?" she was asked.

"I must have been confused," she replied.

Helen had a furnished room at No. 148 West Forty-third street, in the heart of the Tenderloin. She says she is very old and she looks to be about that age.

An odor of gas in the halls of the Forty-third street house attracted the attention of one of the roomers who was about to retire at 8 o'clock this morning. The odor was traced to the room of Helen Baxtor, and she was found unconscious. All the gas jets in the room were turned on.

Policeman Sellenrich, of the West Forty-seventh street station, had little difficulty in reviving the girl. She was taken to the station-house, where she told her remarkable story of the quadruple suicide.

From the story she told Magistrate Moss in the police court it appears that she came from Sweden seven years ago with her parents and settled in St. Paul. After graduating from a business college there last May she came to New York.

She obtained a situation as a stenographer and worked until she met a man who led her astray. Then she drifted to the Tenderloin and her attempt at suicide. Magistrate Moss turned her over to the Probation Officer of the West Side Court, who will get her clothes and send her back to St. Paul.

Under a Keeper's Eye.

Mr. Beattie is under the eye of a keeper constantly. He did have for months a parole which allowed him almost complete liberty, but he abused the privilege. He annoyed people in the village and smuggled matches into his dormitory. When accused he would deny, and when proof was offered he would fall back on the same man's ready excuse: "Well, so I did."

Mr. Beattie during his parole never made any effort to escape. When asked one day by Dr. Macy why he never did, he replied: "No, I don't want to run away. When I'm all right I know you will let me go."

Another inmate of the hospital is a former Custom-House officer who was well acquainted with Mr. Beattie. He is suffering from paresis and is very much worse off mentally. As these two patients are very much in each other's company, they argue on great political issues, and although Mr. Beattie invariably gets the better of the argument, the other patient seems to regard himself as much the sinner of the two.

Recently the parolee wrote out a very formal application for his own discharge, which he addressed to Dr. Macy. He wound up the paper with a request that Mr. Beattie might be paroled in his custody, saying that the latter would in that event be perfectly safe. He was very much surprised when his application was refused, but Mr. Beattie seemed to enjoy his friend's change.

Mr. Beattie is in good health, but his malady is considered absolutely incurable.

NEW ORLEANS ENTRIES.

NEW ORLEANS, La., March 13.—The thirty races for Monday's program are as follows:

FIRST RACE—Four furlongs, purse \$100.

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HANS S. BEATTIE, IN ASYLUM, SINGING OF PARESIS

Former Surveyor of Port Spends His Time at Typewriter.

(Special to The Evening World.)

KINGS PARK, March 14.—Hans S. Beattie was busy at his typewriter when an Evening World reporter called at the State Hospital here to see him.

He was writing one of the thousands of letters which he sends away to persons he knew when, as political leader or railroad financier, he was regarded as a man of power in the municipality of New York.

The reporter was not allowed to talk with Mr. Beattie, but much was learned of his life here from Dr. William Austin Macy, the superintendent of the asylum.

"Mr. Beattie is suffering from what I believe to be an incurable insanity," said Dr. Macy. "I can see that he is slowly getting more incompetent. He is not paretic, but his illness is due directly, I believe, to the abuse of alcohol. He came here about three years ago, upon a regular commitment and I gave him the most careful examination."

"He had letters, which he had written, that showed more clearly than any other one thing the state of his mind and upon these I questioned and cross-questioned him. He would make foolish denials and when shown the evidence he would answer:

"Well, was up to you to make out a case against me."

"When I asked him if he would make an explanation of his actions, he said he could if he was given a typewriter and paper. When this was done, he sat down and began to write. He wrote all day, and his answers were written in ink. They were of a most extraordinary nature."

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